GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3726
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2000
PM ADDRESS TO THE US CONGRESS
A.P. JITHENDER REDDY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in his address to the joint session of the US congress in September, 2000 our Prime Minister had mentioned about the `near unique` approach of the US Congress towards India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there has been any fixed approach of US towards India going by the past 50 years of Indo-US relations;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, whether there has been any shift in US approach towards India in recent times; and

(f) if so, the reasons therefore and the circumstances behind such a shift, if any?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. Prime Minister, who was the only foreign leader invited to address a Joint Sitting of the 106th Congress of the US, had in his address referred to the `near unique` approach that the US Congress had adopted towards India.This was in the context of the fact that in November 1999 the US House of Representatives adopted a resolution by 396 to 4 votes,congratulating India on the successful conclusion of the national elections in October 1999 and calling for stronger Indo-US relations.

(c), (d) & (e) Both sides recognise that the two countries have not realised the full potential of their bilateral relations in the past. In the Vision of the new relationship between India and the United States, outlined by Prime Minister and President Clinton on 21March 2000 in New Delhi, the two leaders had agreed that `There have been times in the pastwhen our relationship drifted without a steady course. As we now look towards the future, we are convinced that it is time to chart a new and purposeful direction in our relationship`.

The two sides agree that the visit of President Clinton to India and that of Prime Minister to the United States have contributed towards building a closer and qualitatively new relationship between India and the United States, based on mutual respect and equality. Both sides regard Prime Minister`s visit to the United States as having helped to accelerate theupward path in the relationship and move it to a higher plane.

In order to implement the vision of the new relationship, the two sides have established an architecture of wide ranging institutional dialogue between the two countries, covering political and security matters, trade and commerce, finance and investment, science and technology, energy and environment, counter-terrorism, and UN peacekeeping. It envisages regular meetings at the level of Prime Minister-US President as well as ministerial-level and senior officials-level dialogue.

(f) The vision of a new relationship has resulted from growing dialogue between the two sides in recent years. It is predicated on the recognition of the many shared values, interests and opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation, and of the important and positive role that closer Indo-US relations can play in the global affairs in the 21st century. In their Vision Statement of 21 March 2000, the two leaders agreed that `In many ways, the character of the 21st century world will depend on the success of our co-operation for peace, prosperity, democracy and freedom` and that this ` presents us with an opportunity, but also a profound responsibility to work together`. In a Joint Statement issued after theirmeeting on 15 September 2000 in Washington, Prime Minister and President Clinton `reiterated their conviction that closer cooperation and stronger partnership between the two countries will be a vital factor for shaping a future of peace, prosperity, democracy, pluralism and freedom for this world`.